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CATSKILL BEARS.
The Various Ways in Which They Are Captured by the Hunters in Winter.
New PAALTE, N. Y.—Those who visit the many mountain resorts among the Catskills in the summer have no idea that it is a wild beast hunting-ground in the winter. Such is the fact, however, and perhaps no spot in the state is so noted for bears and smaller animals as the neighborhood of Shandaken, Ulster county. With the exception of the few small settlements the territory is one wilderness of mountain and timber land. Forty years ago nearly the entire population were trappers and hunters. At the present time there are many backwoodsmen who gain their livelihood by fishing for trout and other fish in the summer and hunting and trapping in the winter. In severe winters the snow is deep on the mountains and in the ravines and notches. In the latter places it remains far into the spring. At the present time the snow in many places is from 3 to 5 feet deep. There are many wild and picturesque spots in the town of Shandaken, among which may be mentioned the notch in Deep Hollow, the Hunter Notch, Devil's Glen, Westkill Clove and Big Indian Hollow. The mountains that run up along Deep Hollow are from 2,500 to 3,500 feet high and are the winter homes of bears. These mountains are very steep and abound in rocky ledges, under nearly all of which can be found deep holes or caves. Ragged as they are they are beautiful objects to look at in the winter sunlight, their snow-capped peaks fairly dazzling the beholder. In past years larger bears have been killed than of late, although instead of becoming extinct among the Catskills bears are more numerous now than ever before. A well known trapper gives as his reason for this that a number of years ago, when the mountains were well timbered, the bears could scarcely find anything to eat and had to live on roots, bark and whatever game they could lay their paws on. Since the wood has been cleared off shrubs and bushes have grown thickly, intermingled with birch and trailing vines, which furnish berries and other food for wild animals. As brush is very much like a hog he will eat pretty much anything in the animal or vegetable line.
In the coldest weather bears usually house themselves in small caves or openings, under the ledges of rocks, where it is dry; but when the winter is open they come out and are easily tracked over the light snow. They usually select the southerly face of a mountain for their holes or dens, probably because it is warmer and more pleasant. It is considered that they eat nothing while housed up, but lie rolled up in a heap. They will remain in that condition the greater part of the winter unless aroused by dogs who scent them out. Dogs are their natural enemies. Bears pay but little attention to the loud yelping of the dogs but put on a bold front. Few experienced dogs are foolish enough to go beyond the mouth of a cave, for a full grown bear can ward off half a dozen good dogs with the greatest ease. When a dog receives a fair blow from one of its paws it quickly "goes to grass," with the blood spurting from its wounds. At sight of man, however, bears become uneasy, and try to escape. As a general rule they will never fight a man unless forced into it. When they have cubs and are followed closely they will keep them ahead and follow close in the rear to protect them. If pushed closely they will make a great show of fight, growl and tear the bark from the trees with much fuss and noise, and do their utmost to frighten off the enemy, and if there is no hope for it they will fight fiercely when brought to bay. Bears, when known to be with young, are left alone, unless the hunters are well armed for a fight. Experienced dogs greatly assist the hunter, and do much toward checking the speed of the bear. Now and then they nab bruiser by a hind leg, which worries him greatly. After a dog has tackled a bear once, however, he knows enough to keep out of the reach of his paws, and, being nimble than bruiser, he has little trouble in doing this.
Hunters are often given a long and weary chase over the mountains and through the valleys ten, fifteen and even twenty miles, generally in the roughest places, for the bear, when he finds that he is tracked, will pick out the most tangled and impassable places he can reach, going down in deep ravines, where the brush and briars are so thick that they will tear the clothing of the hunters if they attempt to follow him, while bruiser will shuffle along, because of his thick hide, almost as fast as though on better ground. The articles necessary to complete the outfit of a bear hunter are few and simple. A good dog and a breech loading; double barrel shotgun, heavy boots, coarse and thick trousers and short coat and a belt with apartments for cartridges and pistol prepare the hunter for his sport. When the snow is deep the chase will be slow and tedious, but if there is only a light fall the hunters will get so interested that they will keep up a dog-trot for some distance. Care must be taken upon nearing bruiser that he does not scent the hunter, or else he will give him a tough time of it, as the bear will make for the most tangled spots and nine times out of ten escape. If the hunter can

get within easy shooting distance on good ground the bear, supposing only dogs after him, becomes an easy victim. Sometimes it is easier and more profitable to trap bears than to hunt them with powder and ball. Various kinds of traps are used. The log trap, which captures the bear alive, and the heavy steel trap, with hook or log attachment, are considered the best.
When a bear finds himself trapped in a steel trap he usually makes for a ledge of rocks, and then tries to break the trap by slapping it down with all his might, and as they generally have great strength, it takes a good trap to stand it. When a bear finds that he cannot get rid of the trap he tries to get away, but of course is easily followed, as the trap with the attachments forces him to travel very slowly. Some hunters claim that when a bear gets his foot in a trap, and finds he cannot get rid of it, he will actually chew off the leg, leaving part of it in the trap, and go off and nurse the wounded stump so well that in a short time it will heal up so that he can travel pretty nearly as well as before. When a Shandaken hunter wants to capture a bear alive he uses the log trap and baits it with a sheep's head, well roasted, which will tempt a bear into almost any place.
SOMETHING ROTTEN IN THE STATE OF DENMARK.
King Christian IX., the reigning potentate of the important kingdom of Denmark, is in something of a fix. Denmark, like all well constituted nationalities, has a legislature. The upper house is called the Landsting, and the lower house the Folkething. The legislature is known as the Rigsdag. Political excitement is intense on that serious spot of the globe. The king and his subjects are not in harmony. There has long been irritation between them. The king is determined to have an irresponsible cabinet, and the Folkething is determined to have the same resolute extent that he shall have nothing of the kind. The members of the Folkething are elected by popular suffrage. In 1881 the liberals secured a large majority in that body and refusing to vote supplies, the king dissolved it, ordering another election. This, in the same year, resulted in increased majorities for the liberals. The king, nevertheless, clung to his obnoxious ministry, and the upper house, standing by him, as a matter of retaliation, refused to concur in important measures passed by the Folkething. On the other hand, the Folkething, during the session of 1882-3, buried in committees forty-two out of fifty bills introduced by the government. The country of course suffered through this systematic obstructiveness, but the liberals, sustained by the country, would not yield. As a result, at the general election of the present year, the liberals elected 82 out of 102 members, the conservatives elected 20 and the government only 17. The liberals swept Copenhagen itself.
After this signal defeat of the government, it was expected that the king would now assuredly dismiss his unpopular cabinet. Instead, however, he merely, in his speech from the throne, urged that the two parties act in concord on the question of national defenses. The successful liberals will know how to deal with this important subject without an appeal from the contumacious head of the kingdom. Fortunately for the liberals, something approaching universal suffrage prevails in Denmark. Every reputable citizen who has attained the age of thirty years, may vote. This much is secured beyond revocation. The king has the higher chamber with him, but the country has the lower. Which will at length yield to the other? Not the popular branch assuredly. Danish royalty may be stubborn, but the stubbornness must sooner or later break.
A new skating surface called "crystal ice," has been invented by Dr. Calantariens, of Scarborough, England. Considering that after all ice is merely a crystalline substance and that there is no lack of substances that are crystalline at ordinary temperatures, Dr. Calantariens experimented with a variety of salts, and after a time succeeded in making a mixture consisting mainly of carbonate and sulphate of soda, which, when laid as a floor by his plan, can be skated on with regular ice skates; the resistance of the surface is just equal to that of ice, and in indeed when it has been skated on and "cut up" a little, the deception is quite astonishing.
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